222
554

wild blueberry - "agam", very common; with thorny twigs, resembling the sloe tree;found not far from rivers, on the woyna dega.

wild fig tree - "shola", or "warka", giant tree (ficus sycomorus) with small but very sweet fruit.

"qamma" - fruit resembling raisin, turns brown when ripe, sour, consumed as mild laxative.

mushroom - "enguday", or "anguday", with white bottom. Rarely eaten.

"awut" - common, reddish or white fruit of a nettle bush, of very low prestige and consumed only in time of famine; gathered in early dry season (Mäskäräm to Ter).

Only lemons are consumed publicly without shame. They are purchased on the market. Bananas from the lowlands are also available to urban people, or "great men" who can afford them. Observers have suggested that the common nose-bleeding of Amhara may result from a Vitamin C deficiency, due to little fruit consumption.

[164
146]

Collecting also provides such necessities as wild cotton in more remote areas (e.g. the Magnza district of Wolqait). Every housewife uses leaves of the "lola" bush in which to bake the festive bread "dabbo".

Wild honey is obtained from the wild bee called "tazzema" (Apis africans miaia), and used against colds as well as "heart ailments". More commonly, honey for making the alcoholic drink "tej", is obtained from a small, tiny-stinged bee (Apis dorsata), but since many of the bees are killed when they are smoked out, this process, too, is one of collecting rather than bee culture.

[278]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *çhirāq* is sometimes evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still another figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of sucking and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discontinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible